

**Silver Spring
Transportation Management District
Advisory Committee
April 8, 2010**

Abbreviations Used Herein:

CE = County Executive
COG = Council of Governments
CSS = Commuter Services Section
EOB = Executive Office Building
MOU = Memorandum of Understanding
SHA = State Highway Administration
TMAg = Traffic Mitigation Agreement

Item 1, 2 – Introductions/Minutes Approval: Approval of the March minutes was postponed to the end of the meeting – no quorum.

Item 3 – Chair Comments: Mr. Wexler requested that updates be given before **Jeff Dunckel's** Pedestrian Safety presentation.

Item 4 – Updates: **Ms. Brecher** reported on the CE recommended 2.7 million dollar Ride-On cuts such as reducing the span and frequency of services, some segments will also be discontinued. The cuts are a result of the FY 11 \$780 million dollar budget deficit. If the cuts are approved they will go into effect 7/4/10. Members of the community can continue to provide input as the Council deliberates. The CE also recommended Ride-On fare increases

- Cash fare \$1.45 to \$1.60 or to \$1.70 to keep in sync with proposed Metro increases
- SmarTrip will be raised from \$1.35 to \$1.45 or \$1.60 if Metro fares increase.
- Express bus routes cash fare will go up to \$3.75 and SmarTrip will go up to \$3.65
- Youth Cruiser passes increased by \$1.00
- Summer youth passes increased by \$3.00
- All day bus passes eliminated
- Transfer from Metro Rail to Ride-On increased from \$.85 to \$1.00

Council Members have put forth proposals

- ½ price off senior/disabled fares up to \$.80
- ½ fare charge for senior/disabled attendant up to \$.80
- eliminating the Kids Ride Free program which operates 2-7pm weekdays

Hearings on program cuts will take place April 22, 2010 at the COB in the 3rd floor hearing room. All information is located on the Ride-On website. The link will be sent to Committee Members.

The Give and Ride campaign will take place April 12th-17th. Ride-On riders can ride free with donation of a non-perishable food item. Proceeds will go to the Manna Food Bank. The TRiPS Commuter Stores are also accepting donations in exchange for Courtesy Cards good for a free ride on Ride On buses.

CSS additional updates were:

- Earth Day on April 22nd
- Bike to Work Day –May 21st (Silver Spring Pit Stop @ Discovery Building – one of nine in the County)

- Live Near Your Work workshop, called Sustainable Commuting - June 10th (Programs assisting with finding employees affordable homes near work and information on telework programs)

Ms. Brecher explained the importance of the Sustainable Commuting program stating that because employees often times cannot afford to live near their employment traffic congestion is a result. The seminar discusses Federal, State and local programs available to help employees find affordable homes near their job site resulting in reduced transportation cost. Some speakers attending the event will be **Rick Nelson**, Director of Housing and Community Affairs of Montgomery County and Steve Silverman, Director of the Department of Economic Development. The event will take place at the EOB Auditorium 8:30 am-12pm, with registration, networking and refreshments beginning at 8:00am.

Mr. Tull said many business look at the Silver Spring area and the difficulty with employees getting to work and 10 years ago there was a program that the County and Employers would match \$1000 toward closing cost. However the program ran out of money.

Ms. Mazo said a master plan approved by Council will include building residential units near businesses. Unfortunately, said **Ms. Brecher**, the County cannot control the affordability of the units.

The House Keys for Employees state program does offer assistance for first time home buyers up to \$5,000 and the Smart Keys for Employees program will double that to \$10,000 for settlement and down payment cost if the home is bought in certain areas. **Ms. Brecher** said that they have tried to negotiate provisions for mixed use developments with traffic mitigation agreements with developers whereby they require them to market residential units to employees in the area. Unfortunately there is a lot of push back from developers regarding the provisions and also it is difficult to get these provisions into these agreements if they are not part of the conditions of approval for that development established by the Planning Board.

In response to **Ms. Mazo's** questions about the effects of the FY11 budget cuts on CSS's mission of getting more people to take mass transit; **Ms. Brecher** said that any cuts to bus service affects CSS because it reduces alternative transit options available to employees. The budget cuts have eliminated FareShare and Super FareShare programs. However the Silver Spring and Bethesda Parking Lot Districts have available funds will be used for an Employer Pass program which will be piloted in the Silver Spring and Bethesda TMDs.

Ms. Brecher announced the retirement of **Terrie O'Steen** whose last day will be April 30th. Also the marketing services budget has been cut and some of the funds used to cover staffing costs rather than for marketing services from contractors.

There is a Council budget hearing tonight 4/8/10 at 7 pm.

Also there was a meeting at the Regional Center about the FY 11 budget cut impacts. **Ms. Mazo** explained that because the Silver Spring Urban District is solely publicly operated (unlike Bethesda which is operated by Bethesda Urban Partnership (BUP) which is a public/ private entity) Silver Spring was hardest hit by the budget cuts.

The reported cuts in Silver Spring:

- Decreased funding for the Clean and Safe program
- 25% decrease in Urban District funding – including elimination of one position
- Regional Center -- two staff positions were eliminated

Ms. Mazo said the cuts have a harder impact to Silver Spring TMD because of the effort to try to attract business to the area and because people need to feel safe using transit. Also the Silver Spring area is still developing and she is afraid new projects such as the Civic Center potentially will not be fully realized. She feels this is not completely understood by the County Executive.

Mr. Tull agreed with **Ms. Mazo**, stating that Libraries are being cut to minimize cuts to Police and Fire however there will still be continuation of some events which will lessen the cuts impact. Ultimately there will have to be a change in the way the Regional Center relates to area business and commuters because of lack of staffing. **Mr. Tull** announced that his position is being eliminated so he will be retiring June 1st.

Item 5 – Pedestrian Safety: Montgomery County Pedestrian Safety Coordinator

Jeff Duncel introduced **William Haynes** the new Pedestrian Safety Engineer. **Mr. Haynes** will oversee pedestrian safety engineering improvements.

Mr. Duncel discussed the County Statistical Review which is used by the County Executive to determine the cost effectiveness of pedestrian programs. There has been a decline in pedestrian collisions and fatalities. The fourth quarter review will be available Friday, 4/8/10. The premiere strategy is to focus on the high incident areas, of which Silver Spring is one, because the areas involve state highways and working with SHA has been difficult in regards to instituting pedestrian safety improvements. Funding has been increased for the Safe Routes to School program providing for putting in crosswalks and parking restrictions reducing pedestrian collisions.

Mr. Duncel went over the high incident areas in which assessments have been made or are being made:

- Wisconsin Avenue
- Rockville Pike
- Piney Branch
- Georgia Avenue
- Four Corners Area

The assessments were modified to target smaller area locations due to the cost associated with larger distances. The initial cost estimates for Piney Branch and other project assessments have doubled which led to the modifications.

Mr. Tull commented on how well Montgomery County, Dept. of Housing and Community Affairs and State Highway Administration (SHA) worked together on the Georgia Avenue project due to **Mr. Duncel's** office setting the preliminary engineering work. **Mr. Duncel** reported that **Mr. Haynes** will be the coordinating liaison between the different agencies.

Mr. Haynes described his role in the Silver Spring Library's pedestrian safety plan. Montgomery County is developing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to work more closely with SHA in coordinating pedestrian safety audits and increasing partnerships to complete engineering tasks. He said their office has a consultant working with the Dept. of General Services to do a Pedestrian Impact Statement which looks at pedestrian mobility and safety for the Silver Spring Library redevelopment plan. The County plans to make the Pedestrian Impact Statement standard for all future development projects in an effort to advocate pedestrian safety and accessibility. The impact statements will be completed by the end of May before the library's fall groundbreaking.

Mr. Dunckel added that the Veteran's Plaza Civic Building was already underway before the pedestrian impact statement was done, which will most likely lead to retrofitting the Ellsworth and Fenton intersection; however, the Fillmore Music Hall will have a pedestrian impact statement.

Mr. Dunckel discussed traffic calming and bus stop improvements, which is a faster process with County roads [vs. state roads]. Most pedestrian collisions occur around bus stops. Bump outs, crosswalk enhancements and other traffic calming measures are used to narrow or appear to narrow roadways, encouraging drivers to slow down. In July 2007 Connecticut Avenue, between Bel Pre and Georgia Avenue, the average recorded speed was 48 mph; after improvements, the average speed was 40 mph for the posted speed of 40 mph. Before calming improvements, there were 10 pedestrian collisions; after improvements, there were three collisions. The results were calculated three years before and after to measure improvements. Other locations where traffic calming measures have been used are Aspen Hill Road, which reduced pedestrian collisions from 14 to 0; and Arcola Avenue, reducing pedestrian strikes from 10 to three. There are plans to institute similar traffic calming improvements on Sligo Avenue in the next nine months.

In response to **Mr. Carlson's** question about Maryland State law, requiring that drivers yield to pedestrians [in reference to improvements on Aspen Hill Rd], **Mr. Dunckel** said that they will start placing signs on the crosswalk panels to alert drivers to the crosswalks.

Mr. Dunckel explained how the light poles on Sligo had been moved by Pepco. Pepco originally planned to just replace the poles; however, the poles prevented wheelchair accessibility. **Mr. Dunkel's** office worked with Pepco to widen the sidewalks, allowing Pepco to place poles away from the walk area; this resulted in 48-inch clear zones. Wheelchair accessibility is a common problem due to light poles. Pepco provided a listing of planned utility pole replacements, which is currently being reviewed by the County.

In response to **Rukiyat Gilbert's** question about police impact on decreased speed in the traffic calming improvement areas, **Mr. Dunckel** said police input is used for high impact areas and not traffic calming locations. Results show that speed cameras are effective in reducing traffic speed, and he hopes to combine speed cameras with traffic calming to prevent pedestrian collisions. He said speed trailers, which display a driver's measured speed, are used as precursors to the installation of speed cameras.

Mr. Dunckel reported on clusters of senior pedestrian strikes which have occurred in Silver Spring, Bethesda and Rockville Pike. He added that the County is enhancing usage of the Safe Routes to Schools program for the younger population and utilizing a bilingual information platform for pedestrian programs.

The Safe Routes to Schools program can provide sidewalks based on assessments which may be paid out of the County's sidewalk program. The Spring Campaign and Safe Routes to School are targeting education and outreach due to the increased pedestrian collisions in November and December.

Ms. Mazo asked if collisions tend to go up during warmer months because pedestrians are out walking more. **Mr. Dunckel** said yes, and it is the opposite during the winter months even though snow poses clear walkway problems. Most pedestrian collisions occur during the daylight saving time on state roads with only a third of them on County roadways. Twenty-three percent of collisions occur in parking lots, which poses private property problems. Analysis is being done to see which lots are having the problems. State roadways are strongly targeted for enforcement due to the higher average speeds.

Mr. Wexler commented that he was glad to see the County's Dept. of Transportation, SHA and the housing community working together making changes from the Georgia Avenue pedestrian safety audit

results. **Mr. Haynes** said there is a state database for roadway recommendations from similar audits. Part of the coordination process for future road projects will be a pre-audit meeting with SHA and other stakeholders to determine any planned or approved projects. **Mr. Haynes** believes that making SHA a stakeholder and including them the beginning will result in better cooperation.

Mary Beck, an SHA pedestrian safety engineer, will participate in the upcoming Reddie Drive audit.

Ms. Brecher asked if any pedestrian safety initiatives overlap with bike safety issues. **Mr. Haynes** said they are looking at Medical Center preliminary site plans for bike racks and sidewalks for bike access points. However, they do need to incorporate bike safety language more when talking about road safety audits. **Mr. Dunkel** added they need to be more proactive than reactive on the bike issue. The County is using information from **Casey Anderson**, Washington Area Bicyclist Assn., for adapting their programs to bicycle safety. They are also looking at a program from Portland called Bike Boulevards for bikes as well.

Ms. Brecher asked if there are any issues with the County granting permission for bikes to ride on sidewalks conflicting with pedestrian safety for areas without bike trails. The Pedestrian Safety Advisory Committee has a representative to deal with bike issues, and there is a recommendation by the Committee to allow bikes to ride on crosswalks as well as sidewalks.

Mr. Wexler said education is needed for bikers, because of their dual roles as pedestrian and motorist.

Item 6 – Minutes Approval: The March minutes were approved and seconded.

Item 7 – Around the Room: **Ms. Brecher** announced that CSS would be on hand at the Affordable Housing Conference, May 6th, at the North Bethesda Marriot at White Flint. **Ron Sims**, Deputy Secretary of HUD, will be the keynote speaker.

Cathy Wilde announced that SWANA is now a Green Business.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30
Next meeting date: May 13, 2010

Silver Spring Transportation Management District Advisory Committee Attendance Sheet
April 8, 2010

Voting Members (12)			
Name	Affiliation	Present	Absent
Chamber Members (3)			
Martin Atkinson	M&T Bank		X
Tom Collins	Atlantech Online		X
Samantha Mazo / Co-chair	Linowes and Blocher LLP	X	
Citizens Advisory Board Members (3)			
Edward Furgol	Kemp Mill, Four Corners, East SS	X	
Vacant	North & West Sector Plan Area		
Andrew Wexler / Co-chair	CBD Resident	X	
Employers less than 50 employees (3)			
Rukiyat Gilbert	Southern Management Co.	X	
Everton Latty	iDeal Decisions, Inc.	X	
Cathy Wilde	Solid Waste Assoc. of N. America	X	
Employers with 50 or more employees (3)			
G. Michael Price	Discovery Communications	X	
Robin Goudy	Social & Scientific Systems	X	
Vacant			
Non-Voting Members (4)			
Sandra Brecher, DOT Transit Services	DOT Director or Designee	X	
Christine McGrew	M-NCPPC	X	
Sergeant Thomas Harmon	Montgomery County Police		X
Staff			
Terrie O'Steen	DOT, Commuter Services	X	
Nakengi Byrd	DOT, Commuter Services	X	
Jim Carlson	DOT, Commuter Services	X	
Guests			
Jeff Dunckel	DOT Pedestrian Safety Coordinator	X	
William Haynes	DOT Pedestrian Safety	X	
Mel Tull	SS Regional Center	X	